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ABSTRACT

Based on recommendations from a state Task Force on Institutional Effectiveness, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board developed a new institutional review system designed to identify institutional and programmatic strengths and areas of concern, verify institutional outcomes and improvement efforts, identify exemplary programs and innovative ideas, and review progress toward college goals. Under the evaluation process, individual institutions are responsible for the deployment of financial, personnel, and physical plant resources, while the process calls for yearly college self-studies to produce an Annual Data Profile and site visits conducted every 4 years by faculty and administrators at state community and technical colleges and Board staff. Specifically, evaluation is based on the following five critical success areas: (1) mission, or the institution's commitment to fulfilling the statutory mandates for community and technical colleges and to meeting the unique needs of the college's service area; (2) effective use of resources, assessing the commitment to policies and procedures to ensure quality planning and continuous improvement of programs; (3) access, focusing on the commitment to serving the diverse educational, social, and workforce development needs of the citizens of Texas; (4) achievement, reviewing the commitment to attaining the high quality performance of students, programs, and services; and (5) quality, focusing on the commitment to meeting or exceeding standards of excellence in programs and services. A description of possible site visit team recommendations to colleges and appeals procedures is included. (TGI)

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Institutional Effectiveness

at Community and Technical Colleges in Texas

A State-Level Evaluation Process

October 1995

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Institutional Effectiveness

- Reviews the effectiveness of public community and technical colleges in achieving their statutory missions.
- Uses the evaluation results continuously to improve institutional performance and programs.

Background

In 1993, Commissioner of Higher Education Kenneth H. Ashworth appointed a Task Force on Institutional Effectiveness to develop a state-level evaluation and continuous improvement plan focusing on workforce education and academic programs at community and technical colleges in Texas. In response to the recommendations of the Task Force, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) staff developed a new review system that:

- Identifies institutional and programmatic strengths and areas of concern.
- Verifies institutional outcomes and improvement efforts.
- Identifies exemplary programs and innovative ideas.
- Reviews progress toward goals established by colleges in Annual Data Profiles, Carl D. Perkins annual and discretionary grant applications, and OCR compliance.

Performance Expectations

State-level evaluation systems typically are designed to respond to the expectations of consumers and to goals established by the state for higher education. In Texas, expectations are placed on the Coordinating Board by the Legislature, Governor, and the federal government, as outlined in the following documents:

- Section 61.0651, Texas Education Code.
- Senate Bill 642, 73rd Legislature, Regular Session, 1993.
- Federal Perkins Act (U.S. Public Law 101-392).
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.
- Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The following documents outline performance expectations for community and technical colleges in Texas:

- Texas Education Code, Sections 130.003 and 135.01.
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation requirements.
- *Technical Education Program Guidelines* (1993).
- *Performance Measures and Core Standards for Postsecondary Technical Education Programs* (1992).
- *Texas Academic Skills Program Policy Manual* (August 1993).

Design and Purposes of State-Level Evaluation

The Institutional Effectiveness process for community and technical colleges in Texas is designed to:

- Accommodate the diversity of institutions.
- Focus on outcomes.
- Leave the process of self-assessment to the colleges.
- Use existing databases where possible.
- Keep the process simple.
- Ensure integrity in the process and its results.

The purpose of the Institutional Effectiveness process for community and technical colleges in Texas is threefold:

- Continuous improvement of community and technical colleges in response to state and federal goals and mandates, including workforce education and training.
- Accountability to the Texas Legislature, Governor, and U.S. Department of Education for public expenditures.
- Demonstration of the quality and responsiveness of community and technical colleges in developing a well-educated citizenry and a highly trained workforce.

Institutional Responsibilities

The primary focus of institutional effectiveness at the state level is the evaluation and continuous improvement of instructional programs. Certain functions are the responsibility, first, of the institution's governing board and administration. Such functions include, among others:

- Deployment of college financial, personnel, and physical plant resources.
- Management and decision-making structure and style.
- Instructional philosophy.

The Institutional Effectiveness Cycle

Data Collection
Reporting
Analysis
Evaluation of Programs
Improvement Efforts

State-Level Evaluation Process

The state-level evaluation process for Texas community and technical colleges consists of a college self-study, resulting in an *Annual Data Profile*, and a four-year on-site review.

Annual Data Profile

The *Annual Data Profile* summarizes current performance data and annual progress toward meeting state-level goals (e.g., *Master Plan*) and federal reporting requirements. The profile:

- Provides a summary of college programs and services.
- Updates and synchronizes college and state records.
- Shows progress toward long-term goals.
- Provides a database for state-level aggregate reporting.

The *Annual Data Profile* serves as a strong foundation for the on-site review by providing a baseline for the college to assess its effectiveness and showcase its achievements.

Four-Year On-Site Review

The on-site review provides a more detailed review of progress toward state and institutional goals. It involves a three-day campus site visit by a team composed of faculty and administrators from community and technical colleges and Coordinating Board staff. The team evaluates the critical success factors: Mission, Effective Use of Resources, Access, Achievement, and Quality.

Evaluation of Critical Success Factors

According to the common elements found in state and federal goals and mandates for higher education, the Texas state-level Institutional Effectiveness process is based on five critical success factors:

Mission
Effective Use of Resources
Access
Achievement
Quality

> Critical success factors are those "key things that must go right for an enterprise to flourish and achieve its goals."
> John Rockart, Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The critical success factors are evaluated based on the following measures and standards:

Mission: Review of the institution's commitment to fulfilling the statutory mandates for community and technical colleges and to meeting the unique needs of the college's service area.

I. Success Factor: College Purpose

A. **Measure:** College Purpose
Standard: College vision and strategic plan focus on its mission

II. Success Factor: Quality of College

A. **Measure:** SACS Accreditation
Standard: College is fully accredited by SACS

B. **Measure:** Graduate Guarantee
Standard: College has graduate guarantees in place and published for all technical degrees and certificates

C. **Measure:** Quality Improvement Efforts
Standard: College fully implements at least three of the following:

- Strategic planning
- Program evaluation
- Student outcome measures
- Continuous improvement
- Institutional effectiveness
- Improvement plan for administering Perkins annual application

D. **Measure:** Faculty Qualifications
Standard: Faculty qualifications meet SACS standards

III. Success Factor: Institutional Resources

A. **Measure:** Educational and General Funds Costs Within Reason
Standard: College costs are within a normal range for the size of the institution and the type of services it provides.

B. **Measure:** Financial Resources
Standard: College financial resources are adequate to support its mission.

C. **Measure:** Fiscal Accountability
Standard: College has in place an effective accounting and budgeting system.

D. **Measure:** Physical Resources
Standard: Buildings and equipment are adequate to support college programs.

Effective Use of Resources: Review of the institution's commitment to policies and procedures to ensure quality planning and continuous improvement of programs.

I. Success Factor: Effective Use of Resources

A. **Measure:** Funds Expended Appropriately
Standard: Current funds must be expended for allowable costs. Time and effort reports are well-documented.

B. **Measure:** Perkins-Funded Personnel
Standard: Credentials and work experience are appropriate to assignments.

Access: Review of the institution's commitment to serving the diverse educational, social, and workforce development needs of the citizens of Texas.

I. Success Factor: Access to College

A. **Measure:** Access and Equity of Women and Minorities
Standard: No significant difference in proportion of women and minorities in all technical education enrollment compared to overall college enrollment.

B. **Measure:** Access and Equity of Special Populations
Standard: Improvement in the representation of special populations in the institution relative to their representation in the service delivery area (SDA). Increased number of special populations students receiving Perkins services.

II. Success Factor: Access to Programs

A. **Measure:** Special Populations Enrollment
Standard: Technical enrollment is comparable to total college enrollment for special populations.

B. **Measure:** Career Planning and Counseling
Standard: Services are in place and accessible to all students.

C. **Measure:** Learning Resource and Special Services
Standard: Services available to all students are accessible to special populations.

D. **Measure:** Student Follow-up and Placement
Standard: Services available to all students are accessible to special populations.

E. **Measure:** Basic Skills Assessment
Standard: Services available to all students are accessible to special populations.

F. **Measure:** Developmental Classes/Services
Standard: Services available to all students are accessible to special populations.

G. **Measure:** Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Compliance
Standard: College fully complies with OCR requirements.

H. **Measure:** Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Monitoring
Standard: College has fully implemented previous OCR Report.

Achievement: Review of the institution's commitment to attaining high-quality performance of students, programs, and services.

I. Success Factor: Persistence, Remediation, and Graduation

A. **Measure:** Acceptance in Competitive Programs
Standard: Representation by gender, ethnicity, and special populations of accepted students is comparable to representation in the qualified applicant pool.

B. **Measure:** Remediation and Completion of Full-time Students
Standard: 30 percent of full-time students receive a degree or certificate or transfer within three years.

C. **Measure:** Remediation and Completion of Part-time Students
Standard: 30 percent of all students receive a degree or certificate or transfer within five years.

D. **Measure**: Remediation and Retention from Fall to Spring
Standard: 70 percent retention of those with fewer than 12 Semester Credit Hours (SCH); 50 percent retention of those with 6-11 SCH; 35 percent retention of those with 1-5 SCH.

II. Success Factor: Student Outcomes

A. **Measure:** Course Completion
Standard: 50 percent of students complete course.

B. **Measure:** Nine Graduates Over Three-Year Period
Standard: 100 percent compliance for all technical programs (except new programs).

C. **Measure:** 85 percent Placement of Technical Program Graduates
Standard: 100 percent compliance for all technical programs (except new programs).

D. **Measure:** Technical Non-returners Employed or Pursuing Additional Education
Standard: 50 percent of non-returners are employed or are pursuing additional education.

E. **Measure:** Licensure Pass Rate
Standard: 90 percent of all tested students pass licensure exams.

III. Success Factor: Adult Vocational Education/Literacy

A. **Measure:** Industry Contract Training
Standard: College efforts to support the needs of local industry are evident.

B. **Measure:** Adult Vocational Education
Standard: Number of individuals enrolled in Adult Vocational Education (courses with fewer than 360 contact hours) is representative of need of population in the service area.

C. **Measure:** Adult Literacy
Standard: Number of individuals served is representative of need of population in service area.

Quality: Review of the institution's commitment to meeting or exceeding standards of excellence in programs and services.

Quality of Academic Areas

1. Success Factor: Quality of Academic Areas

A. **Measure:** Library Resources
Standard: Quantity and quality of library resources are adequate to support all academic and technical programs.

B. **Measure:** Core Curriculum of Associate Degree Programs
Standard: All programs have a core curriculum -- 100 percent compliance.

C. **Measure:** Transfer Function
Standard: 100 percent compliance in the following:
- At least one formalized written articulation agreement in place to facilitate transfer of students.
- College has studies that demonstrate the success of transfer students.

D. **Measure:** College Publications
Standard: College publications (catalog, class schedule, brochures, student handbooks, etc.) include all procedures, requirements, guidelines, plans, options, prerequisites, and policies of the college.

E. **Measure:** Developmental or Remediation Programs
Standard: Remedial courses in reading, writing, and math are present and analysis of remediation efforts is under way.

II. Success Factor: Teaching Effectiveness

A. **Measure:** Teaching Effectiveness
Standard: College documents at least five areas in which teaching effectiveness is encouraged, enhanced, and/or measured.

B. **Measure:** Faculty Diversity
Standard: Gender and ethnicity of faculty are proportional to their representation in the student body.

C. **Measure:** Professional Development Activities
Standard: Efforts are being made to keep faculty current.

Quality of Technical Programs

I. Success Factor: Quality of Programs -- Part A

A. **Measure:** Program Declared Majors
Standards: Program has at least 15 declared majors during the previous three-year reporting period.

B. **Measure:** Nine Graduates Over Three-Year Period
Standard: 100 percent compliance (except for new programs).

C. **Measure:** 85 percent Placement of Program Graduates
Standard: 100 percent compliance (except for new programs).

D. **Measure:** Professional Accreditation
Standard: Program with mandatory licensure, certification, or registration requirements for program graduates meets standards of the respective agencies.

II. Success Factor: Quality of Programs -- Part B

A. **Measure:** Compliance with THECB technical program requirements
Standard: 100 percent compliance for AAS and certificate programs.

B. **Measure:** General Education Requirements
Standard: 100 percent compliance for all associate degree programs.

C. **Measure:** Faculty Support
Standard: Number of faculty is adequate to support the program.

D. **Measure:** Equipment and Facilities
Standard: Equipment and facilities are adequate and appropriate to support the program.

E. **Measure:** Budget Adequacy
Standard: Budget is adequate to support the program.

F. **Measure:** Linkages and External Agreements with Schools and Universities
Standard: Program has at least one of the following:

- 2 + 2 (+ 2), 1 + 1.
- Tech-Prep.
- Advanced placement.
- University transfer.
- Inverted degree plans.

III. Success Factor: Quality of Programs -- Part C

A. **Measure:** Business and Industry Partnerships
Standard: Active involvement with business/industry and documented evidence of at least two affiliations.

B. **Measure:** Integrating Academic and Technical Education
Standard: Program must include writing and use of computers.

C. **Measure:** Employer and Student Satisfaction
Standard: College measures employer and student satisfaction.

D. **Measure:** Advisory Committee Membership
Standard: Industry, gender, ethnicity, and special populations balance.

E. **Measure:** Advisory Committee Activities
Standard: 100 percent compliance. The Advisory Committee:

- Meets at least once annually.
- Maintains written minutes.
- Advises on curriculum matters.

F. **Measure:** Advisory Committee Quality
Standard: Separate advisory committee for each program or closely related cluster of programs.

G. **Measure:** Determination of Ongoing Program Need
Standard: Meets standard if need based on at least two of the following:

- Industry Advisory Committee.
- Quality Workforce Planning Committee data.
- Local and/or regional labor market surveys.
- National and/or state labor market trend data.
- Graduate placement rate exceeds 85 percent.

H. **Measure:** Identification of Exemplary Program
Standard: Program meets/exceeds all standards on this form (*Exception:* new programs qualify even if they do not meet the nine graduate and 85 percent placement standards) and one of the following is evident:

- Program has received awards/commendations.
- Program should be rated exemplary for reasons noted under "Comments."

Team Recommendations

Following the site visit, the college receives a team report. The report contains general concerns and recommendations for the institution as well as the evaluation instruments for each critical success factor completed by the team. Technical programs reviewed receive one of the following status recommendations:

- **Exemplary** -- the program exceeds evaluation criteria.
- **Continuation** -- the program continues with no revisions or provisions.
- **Continuation with Improvement** -- the program continues, but improvement is recommended in specific program areas.
- **Continuation with Revision** -- the program continues with formal revisions.
- **Sunset Review** -- the program continues to enroll students while concerns are addressed, and is re-evaluated within two years.
- **Deactivation** -- the program suspends enrollment for up to three years while concerns are addressed.
- **Closure** -- the program is discontinued and removed from the college's program inventory or phased out to allow currently enrolled students to complete the program.

Appeals Process

The appeals process includes provisions for the reconciliation of errors of fact in either the *Annual Data Profile* or the Four-Year On-Site Review report. The college can contest recommendations made by the site visit team by providing supplemental information to Coordinating Board staff for further evaluation.

THE GOAL OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION IS CONTINUOUS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT